Hib. 7. 700.

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

IN

DUBLIN:

July *the* 18*th*, 1700.

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By *Daniel Williams*.

Published at the Desire of the said Societies.

DUBLIN:

Printed by *Andrew Crook*, Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, for *Matth. Gunne* at the Sign of the Bible and Crown in *Essex-street*. M DCC.

07-1634

TO THE

Societies for Reformation.

THIS Title wherewith you are adorned, is ſo Divine Beneficent and truly Catholick, that your Requeſt Obliged my compliance in Preaching the following Sermon under all the Diſadvantages of a Traveler.

Tet had I Conferred with Fleſh and Blood, thoſe many accurate Diſcourſes you have on this Subject, muſt have rendred my hurry of buſineſs and want of Books, an inſuperable Argument againſt the Publication of it.

But being perſwaded the Bible is not only the fitteſt Book to juſtifie the Truth of the Duty inſiſted on, but attended with greateſt Authority to inforce it on the Conſcience, the Cenſures of the Polite for my want of other Ornaments, cannot deter me from expoſing what you think Serviceable to your good Deſign, as that which I am ſure is not only according to Gods Word, but undertaken in Obedience to it.

I am not aſhamed the World ſhould know how my Love for Ireland Exalts my Joy at your Attempts, to Suppreſs that Wickedneſs which alone can Ruin it, and to promote Practical Religion, which muſt cauſe its Flouriſhing againſt all Aſſaults: They who leſs affect you, ought to be thankful for your good Succeſs herein, and aſcribe the ſudden proſperity of this Land, to Gods Approbation of your vigorous Endeavours to Reform it.

The Argument whereby I urge all to Aſſiſt in your Bleſſed Work, is too evident to be reſiſted by any, who account Service to God either a Priviledge or a Duty; and next in force to that I Publiſhed on the ſame occaſion in London; viz. That they who promote National Reformation are on Chriſt's ſide, and

they who neglect it are of the Devil's Party, *in the Conteſt managed by them as the* Heads *of their reſpective oppoſite Kingdoms.*

The Conſequence of your Undertaking may Excuſe my Importunity, *becauſe I am under Conviction, that when you become remiſs, or altogether Unſucceſsful, this Nation will be under more than a Probable* Preſage *of ſudden Deſolation, and much ſeverer than any that hath befallen it heretofore.*

If any think me too Cloſe and Plain, *Faithfulneſs to my Lord whom you ſerve, and a peculiar regard for this Land which you would Save, muſt afford the only Apology I dare make. As the Enterprize you are Inſpired to Engage in, is too fully Authorized by Divine and Human Laws, to be thought* Unjuſt, *and too plainly Commanded, and Important in its Effects, to be eſteemed* Indifferent; *ſo its too* contrary *to Satans Intereſt, and the degenerate Inclinations of Mankind, to be* Executed *without great Fortitude, Vigor, Wiſdom, Self-denial, and Union; or to keep your Hearts* by theſe *in a fixed Diſpoſition to* perſue *it, without rich ſupplies of Grace, and great Care and Labour with your* own Spirits, *whence all remains of Sin are not yet expelled.*

Many do joyn with you in Prayer, that your fitneſs may improve by your work; your Reſolution by your Difficulties; your Union, by ill Deſigns to break it; your Succeſs by Oppoſition; and the Purity and Sedateneſs of your own Spirits, by all your Endeavours to Reform others; which (among the reſt) is heartily deſired by,

Your Servant in the Work of the Lord,

Daniel Williams.

Proverbs

Proverbs 28. ver. 4.

They that forſake the Law praiſe the Wicked, but ſuch as keep the Law contend with them.

THE Text includes ſo full a diſtribution of Mankind, that none of us can be Exempted; one part *forſakes* the Law, others *keep* it; ſome Praiſe the Wicked, others Contend with them; ſome are Wicked, others are Godly.

The *Contrariety* of what they are diſtinguiſhed by, is *Extream*; one Renounceth that Rule which the other Sacredly obſerves, *viz.* the Divine Law; the one Approves and Commends thoſe, whom the other Reproves and Puniſheth, *viz.* the Wicked. And no doubt the Difference extends equally to what's implied, tho' not expreſſed, *i. e.* The Good man renounceth thoſe Luſts and Cuſtoms, which the Wicked ſubmit to as their Governing Law, and praiſeth the Righteous with whom the Ungodly do contend.

It might ſeem an unaccountable Wonder, that men ſhould thus greatly differ in their Rules, Behaviour, Favourites and Adverſaries, were the Springs of this Contrariety altogether unknown: But that Wonder will ceaſe, when we conſider that theſe diſtinguiſhed perſons have Spirits, Tempers, Leaders, and Supream Ends and Deſigns, more contrary than their very Behaviour is: Nay, were it not for the Unhealed remains of Sin in the Godly, and ſome Operations of the Holy Ghoſt on the Wicked, the difference between theſe men would be as great, as between Eſtabliſhed *Angels*, and Apoſtate Devils; and when I have ſaid this, can any of you forbear to cry out? Oh how *neceſſary* is Regeneration! And how *great* a Work muſt that be,

which ſo changeth a man from what himſelf once was, as well as others!

The laſt part of the *Text* I ſhall inſiſt on, becauſe it moſt properly anſwers the preſent occaſion. *Such as keep the Law contend with them*, i. e. with the *Wicked.*

The words give us, 1. The *Character* of a Good man, 2. An Inſtance whereby the *Sincerity* of that Character is made good.

I. The Character of a Good man, *He keeps the Law*; that which others forſake, he ſets before him as his directing Light, and a determining Rule; *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path.* What this injoyneth, he ſets himſelf to obſerve; what it forbids, he is watchful to avoid: He acknowledgeth the obliging force of the Will of God, whether it be ſignified to him by the Light of Nature, or poſitive Precepts and Inſtitutions. He is ſubject to every part as well as to any; *I have put away none of thy Statutes from me*: He obſerves it at *all times* as well as ſome, and in *Secret* as well as *Publick.* To this he adheres againſt all *Diſcouragements*, as well as when moſt Countenanced; he'l keep it tho' all *others* ſhould forſake it; yea, declineth it not tho, the *Proud have him greatly in deriſion*, for Obeying it.

Pſal. 119. 105.

Pſal. 18.

Pſal. 119. 51.

This Divine Law effectually preſcribeth to him what he will Believe and Profeſs; it Formeth his inward Temper, Regulates his *Thoughts*, Words and Behaviour; hereby he frameth his Deſires, Deſigns and Reſolves. Obedience thereto is with him a ſufficient Reaſon for his Undertakings, and that which his chief reſpect is to, in whatever he deliberately performs.

To examplifie this in his Inclinations, Affections and Carriage, is his chief endeavour and aim; he Prays, Strives, and induſtriouſly Contriveth and Watcheth to be *compleat in the whole will of God*, and *walketh in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs.*

Col. 4 12. *Luke* 1. 6.

Finally, wherein he is defective or offends, he ſeriouſly blameth himſelf; bewails his Fault, hates his Sin, and ſincerely reſolves amendment by greater Watchfulneſs, and more

more fervent Applications to Chriſt for the aſſiſtance of his Spirit.

He that anſwers this Account, keeps the Law in a *Goſpel* Sence; his Obedience is Evangelical, though in many things it be ſhort of that which is Legal or Perfect.

II. We have one Inſtance whereby the Sincerity of this Character is made good: *They contend with the Wicked. q. d.* The behaviour of Men towards the Wicked ſhews whether themſelves keep or forſake the Law. It's a plain Characteriſtick, if they praiſe the Wicked they are Men who forſake the Law; but if they contend with ſuch, they are Keepers of the Law. Whatever effectually inclines Men to keep the Law, will compell them to contend with the Wicked; as that which prevails with Men to forſake it will diſincline them to contend with ſuch. It's indeed not to be expected that ſuch as live in Stated Rebellion againſt the Will of God, ſhould oppoſe the Profligate; but it is ſo decent, congruous and neceſſary for the Keepers of the Law to oppoſe the Wicked; and therefore to be expected that God ſets it down as a fixed diſtinguiſhing property of ſuch, *They contend with the Wicked.* You'l find them thus employed againſt violent Tranſgreſſors, and thereby diſcriminated from them.

I ſhall in ſome few Poſitions explain the Words, and thereby come to ſtate that Obſervation, which will more directly ſupport you in the work of Reformation, and juſtifie your engaging therein.

1. *Keeping the Law is a fit Deſcription of the Faithful Subjects and Servants of the Living God, and ſuch are intended thereby.* The Servants of God are variouſly denominated, as Men fearing God, Lovers of God, Believers, Saints, Godly, Righteous, &c. But all theſe Titles center in, and refer to this in the Text. *They keep the Law.* For this Law is the meaſure of all Goodneſs, all true Excellency of Spirit, and all Regularity of Practice do lye in a Conformity to this Rule. This perfect Law appoints all that's truly good; and all that is accepted with God is done with a re-

ſpect of Obedience to this Will of his: Whatever juſtly bears the name of any Grace or Virtue, muſt be anſwerable to what this defineth to be ſuch a Grace or Virtue; or it is no better than an Hypocritical Image. Moreover, the *Truth* of the higheſt Graces muſt be adjudged by their Operative Efficacy to the Obedience of this Law: *Faith* without this is dead; and our Saviour determines the Integrity of *Love* in this manner: *If you love me, keep my Commandments.* Yea, his Apoſtle ſaith, *This is Love that we walk after his Commandments.* Not that this is the formal notion of Love, but it is ſuch a neceſſary Effect of it, that it is no true Chriſtian Love which is too weak to produce Obedience.

James 2. 20.

Joh. 14. 15.

2. *Joh.* 6.

Now who is a *Keeper* of the Law? none but he who hath renounced his own Will and Humour, and is reſigned to the Divine Will, the Language of whoſe Heart is, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And is this any other than a *Servant* and *Subject* of the Living God; even one who hath freely accepted God in Chriſt for his Supream Lord and Law-Giver, upon which his Relation of Servant and Subject is founded: But doth this Devotedneſs confine it ſelf to a meer *Profeſſion* of Obedience, however Solemn it be? no, there muſt be real *Performance* to make that good: *His we are whom we Obey.* But this may ſuffice to Evidence that to keep the Law, and to be God's faithful Servants and Subjects, are equipollent Terms.

Act. 9. 6.

Rom 6. 16.

2. *Offenders committing groſs and notorious Crimes, are deſign'd by the Wicked in the Text.* Not bad Men whoſe Crimes are *concealed*, for notice cannot be taken of ſuch: neither can one be called Wicked for meer *Infirmities*; for though *Job* could not acquit himſelf of ſuch, yet he appeals to God, *Thou knoweſt I am not wicked.* The perſons therefore chiefly to be contended with, are ſuch as commit flagitious Crimes; Crimes which infect others, defile the Land, and ſtigmatize the Offender: of which ſort are Idolatry, Blaſphemy, Prophane Swearing, Curſing, Sabbath Profanation, Murther, Whoredom, Thefts, Drunkenneſs, *&c.*

Job 10. 7.

3. *Contending*

3. *Contending with the wicked, imports all juſt and due methods to repel the wickedneſs of Tranſgreſſors.* The difference between good and bad men is fixed, each Pleads his reſpective Cauſe, Perſues his proper Deſign, Acteth his own Inclination, Propagates his own Likeneſs, and Abets his Party and Leader. *Chriſt* and his Intereſt command the ſtrength of his Subjects, in oppoſition to Satan and his Followers: *Satan* as the Head of the Apoſtacy employs his Followers, in oppoſition to Chriſt and his *Reforming* purpoſes: Great is the contradiction, and the conteſt Vehement and Extenſive. The Wicked are intent to reſtrain the Godly from adhereing to the Laws of Chriſt their Soveraign, and hence Violence and Perſecution have their riſe: On the other hand, the Subjects of Chriſt endeavour to ſtop the Deluge of Impiety; they Reaſon, Exhort, Pray, and live down Immoralities; theſe do what they can to Reform the World, as the others ſtruggle to Pervert it. They would rejoyce that their Inſtructions and Intreaties were ſucceſsful to reclaim the Profligate; but when theſe avail not, they inſtance their Zeal by a ſharper Teſtimony againſt crying Provocations, and to their power ſubſerve mens Amendments by what embitters notorious Crimes. *Mat.* 12. 38.

Magiſtrates become a Terror to evil doers, by the Sword of Juſtice; *Miniſters* rebuke and inflict Church Cenſures; *Parents* and *Maſters* apply the Correcting Rod, leaſt Sin grow by the Impunity of Children and Servants.

Object. Some will ſay, Theſe are obliged by Relation and Office to contend with offending Correlates, but what obligation and power hath one *Neighbour or Equal* to embitter Sin in another.

Anſw. Neighbours and Equals are obliged to reprove the Faults of one another, its God's expreſs Charge; *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.* This is by no means to be omitted, nor ſhould any pretence excuſe from it: Thou ſhalt rebuke him *in any wiſe*; they muſt be the profane Imitators of *Cain*, who ſay, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* What is it to me, if he Swear or be Drunk? *Levit.* 19. 17. *Gen.* 4 9.

Drunk? Let him look to himſelf, he is none of my Charge; but ſuch Language is an affront to God's Authority, who Enacts, that thou ſhalt reprove him, and requires the Sinner to accept of thy reproof: You muſt tell him the Evil and Danger of his wicked courſe; his amendment you muſt thus attempt, however diſpleaſing it may be to him to bear it, or to your ſelves to intermeddle in it.

Object. But ſuppoſe it be a Duty to reprove by *Words*, ſure we may reſt at that, whether the Offender Reform or no.

1. *Anſw.* You muſt ſtop at this, if you lived where no puniſhments are *Enacted* againſt thoſe Crimes which your reproof is unavailable to Reform. In ſuch a *Sodom* as allows the forementioned enormities, you muſt be ſatisfied with *Lot* to intreat, *I pray you Brethren do not ſo wickedly*; the deſpiſed reprover muſt not Uſurp the Sword of the Magiſtrate, but grieve at the abominations he wants Authority to puniſh; the Caſe is the ſame as to all ſuch Offences the Law of the Land takes no Cognizance of, when other Crimes be puniſhable by its Inſtitutions.

Gen. 19.7.

2. Anſw. *But verbal reproof will not be ſufficient, where unreformed Crimes are puniſhable by the Law.* If words will reclaim, its well, but where theſe reclaim not, you are obliged to endeavour to reform tranſgreſſors by legal *Severities*, and inforce deſpiſed reproof by ſuch puniſhments as they will more regard: *An evil man ſeeketh only Rebellion, therefore a cruel Meſſenger ſhall be ſent againſt him*; and this private perſons ſhould do by complaints to ſuch as are Authorized to Judge, and inflict the penalties Enacted: Informing in ſuch Caſes is the *neceſſary* work of ſome; for if there be none to convict Offenders, the puniſhment is Enacted *in vain* againſt the Crimes they are Guilty of, ſeeing it cannot be executed: therefore as the declaring of mens Faults to the Magiſtrates is ſuppoſed to judicial cenſures, ſo the very *Parent* was obliged to inform againſt that debauched *Son*, whom his own Correction would not reſtrain;

Prov. 17. 11.

Deut. 17. 5.

Deut. 21. 20.

ſtrain; nay, ſeveral think that very Text, *Reprove not a Scorner*, excuſeth from verbal reproof, only by expoſing him to puniſhments more ſevere, which private perſons cannot otherwiſe do, than by Information; neither ſhould any eſteem this a reproach, for it was not accounted a work to mean for *Princes* to be employed in. Prov. 9. 8. Ezr. 9. 1.

Having made it plain that *ſuch as keep the Law* is a Periphraſis of the Servants and Subjects of the living God; and that the *Wicked* here, are ſuch as are found committing groſs Crimes; alſo that *contending* includeth ſevere penalties as well as reproof by words. I am ſure the Text is a ſufficient ground for this Obſervation.

Doct. *Such as would approve themſelves the Subjects and Servants of the living God, ought, nay, will by juſt ſeverities as well as reproof, endeavour the Reformation of notorious Offenders.*

This Doctrine enlarged and altered into other words, is the ſame as to ſay; He whoſe heart is right with God, will (in this Nation where good Laws are Enacted againſt wickedneſs) not only Reprove, but duly Convict and bring to Legal puniſhment, ſuch as he finds to be Curſers, Swearers, Profaners of the Lords-day, Whore-mongers, Drunkards, &c. he will not forbear this for fear of ſhame, let who will reproach him; he'l do it, tho' his Trade be in danger, and his Perſon threatned and expoſed.

The Text as before explained, is a ſufficient proof of the Doctrine, but ſad experience acquainting us, how much harder it is to prevail with people to do what is their Duty, than to prove it to be ſo; I ſhall not only add ſome further Evidence for this Duty from the Argument, included in the Doctrine, but endeavour to plead that Argument with your Conſciences, that if poſſible I may bring ſuch to attempt the Reformation of others, who have hitherto neglected it, and invigorate the hearts of thoſe who have therein ſo laudably engaged.

Can any Argument be likelier than this to perſwade all Men to uſe due ways to reform Offenders you cannot appear the real Servants of Chriſt, if you omit it?

Will

Will any thing ſo compel ſuch to this Work who think they are his Servants, as a demonſtration that you have not the temper nor Spirit of his Servants, but are meer Hypocritical Pretenders if you neglect it? And how can ſuch who are his faithful Servants be ſo excited to Zeal for this Work, as by convincing Evidence, that if you be remiſs, you *ſo far* offer violence to the *Inſtincts* of your renewed Nature; you diſregard the *Honour* and Intereſts of your Bleſſed Lord; you fruſtrate the deſign of that *Relation* to which you are admitted? you counter-act the Genuine Diſpoſitions of all who are ſincerely *devoted* to God's Service; you deſert the *Party* to which you are united; you favour *Satan* and his Cauſe whom you have renounced; and neglect that real *Felicity* which you are determined to perſue? Now if ſuch conſiderations remove not your Indifferency, and ſecure you not againſt Fear and Idleneſs in this great Deſign, what will?

All theſe Motives will occur, but the great Argument I ſhall more directly inſiſt on is that which the Doctrine preſents to us, *viz. That none approve themſelves the Faithful Servants of God who do not endeavour the Reformation of notorious Offenders.* As for the other Point, *viz.* that this Endeavour muſt be by *Severities* as well as by Reproof, or milder ways; I think already proved, and therefore ſhall leſs enlarge on that.

Now, my well-beloved Friends! would not you be found among the Loyal Subjects and Faithful Servants of your Creator and Redeemer? Yea, do not all of you profeſs to be ſo? Now God's Challenge as to this forementioned Caſe, as well as others, is ſtrict, *If I be a Maſter, where is my Fear,*
Mal. 1. 6. *if I be a Father, where is my Honour?* If I be your *Maſter*, ſhew it by pleading my Cauſe againſt Tranſgreſſors; by that Service ſhew I am indeed your Lord, and you my *Servants*; the time is haſtening when all diſguiſes will be taken off, and God ſhall make an apparent *Difference* between
Mal. 3. 18. ſuch as ſerve him in Reality, and ſuch as put him off with meer pretence; therefore be now willing to endure ſuch Con-

Convictions from his Word as he will faſten by his Sentence when he comes to Judge your State by this as the *Rule of Judgment*; Let no Soul guilty as to this very matter of reforming others, vainly ſupport his pretence to God's Service; for if you live in a ſtated neglect of reſiſting Sin, and endeavours to reform the Wicked, you are not a Servant of God's: If you omit this, whatever you call your ſelves, you do want the great Eſſentials which conſtitute the Temper, Diſpoſition and Behaviour of thoſe who are God's Servants in reality: This will appear if you conſider,

1. *You have not a true Zeal for God's Honour.* Can any of you doubt whether a Man can be God's Servant who hath no Zeal for his Glory? whereas if you know any thing of Religion, you muſt acknowledge that the Glory of God is the *Chief End* of every good Man; and to that it's impoſſible to be indifferent. I muſt have a Zeal for my Chief End, and when that's expoſed, I cannot but reſent it, and endeavour its Vindication and Security with great concernedneſs of mind.

Now wherein is God more diſhonoured than By open flagitious Crimes? His Sacred *Name* is deſpiſed by common Oaths; his *Vengeance* plaid with by Curſes? his *Day* polluted by prophaning the Sabbath; the *Authority* of our Almighty God and of his Laws, are trampled on by theſe and other open Sins. When Men dare *declare their Sins as Sodom*, *Iſa.* 3. 9. they bid defiance to his Government, they ſlight his threatnings, they condemn his Precepts as unjuſt, they contemn his promiſed Rewards as Trifles, they openly avow the Empire of the Devil, they juſtifie Man's Apoſtacy in the view of the World, and to their power they raſe out the Divine Image, and ſhut out the Spirit's Operations which would, if complied with, produce in the Soul thoſe *Impreſſes* of God's Perfections, wherein he is moſt properly Glorified.

And can any one who ſerves and loves his God forbear to oppoſe this? Muſt not the Zeal of all ſuch kindle as *Phineas*? Will not he take hold of all opportunities to vin- *Num.* 25. 10.

dicate the Laws, and assert the Government of his Redeemer, Benefactor and Ruler.

2. *If you neglect the reforming of others you shew no true compassion or love to the Souls of Sinners.* Love to our *Neighbour* is one half of God's Law; our Neighbour's *Soul* is his better part, and therefore its benefit is to be most attended as an Evidence of the Sincerity of that Love to him, which our Lord requires in his Servants. Moreover, Love to Men is an Essential part of Godliness, for wherein are we like God who is *Love*, if Love be a Stranger to us? Nor can any thing be a grosser contradiction than to pretend Subjection to Christ, and yet renounce Love to our Neighbour: And no less irreconcilable would it be to love Men, and yet suffer them to destroy themselves if we are capable to prevent it by stopping their self-ruining course, and forcing them to consider. When persons openly commit their horrid Villanies *their Sins go before hand to Judgment.* And can you with any face profess to love such Men whiles you tamely endure them to proceed for want of a Warning by Reproof, or fixing that Warning by Punishment when Reproof is ineffectual? In which last case, *Ah, be thou reformed without Penal Restraint*, is no more an Evidence of hearty Love than *Ah, be thou Cloathed* when Garments are denied. It's no light matter to be accessary to the Damnation of Souls, and be sure there is a secret Enmity in you against them, whose case requires your utmost pity, and yet it will not move you to do what you can towards their Salvation, no not to assist the Magistrate to inflict those Penalties which may bring Offenders to themselves.

Mat. 22. 30.

1 Tim. 5. 24.

3. *If you neglect Reformation-work, you have not a just Concern for the Welfare of the Community.* A Man truly Devoted to God will *serve his Generation*; a publick Spirit inspires him, and a common Good is dearer to him than his own particular Affairs: *David* is their Pattern when he saith, *If I prefer not* Jerusalem *above my chiefest Joy, let my Right Hand forget her Cunning.* The Servant of God is so far under the power of Self-Denial, as to esteem the Welfare of the Body

Acts 13. 36.

Psal. 137. 6.

of

of his People, in it ſelf preferrable to his own: and leſs than this cannot be inferred, as the meaning of the words of *Moſes* and *Paul*, to whatever Tranſport you aſſign their Wiſhes. Now it's impoſſible to have a publick Spirit, and not ſtrive to reform the Wicked; becauſe a general Miſchief is much promoted by unſubdued Vices, and the publick Good greatly depends upon Reformation. This will appear if you conſider how far, *Exod.* 32. 32. *Rom.* 9. 3.

1. Uncontrouled Vices do corrupt a People.

2. Unreformed Vices expoſe a Nation to Judgments.

1. *Uncontrouled Vices do corrupt a People.* Evil Examples infect and enſnare; and where Sin goes unpuniſhed it ſpreads the faſter, becauſe it appears ſo innocent a thing as not to deſerve Correction. How violently will Men be drawn into thoſe Crimes whereto degenerate Nature inclineth, when they find all ſeem to approve of them, becauſe none call the moſt notorious Offenders to account? The Torrent of Impiety muſt riſe in that place, where many allure and none rebuke it. But ſurely the *beſt Men* in ſuch a Region muſt be baſe, ſelfiſh and cowardly; it can never agree with a publick Spirit to ſit ſtill when you ſee the Plague to ſpread, a Plague which ſo defileth, enſlaveth, debaſeth, diſordereth, and perverts your Countrymen and Fellow Citizens: All which is fulfilled by the Immoralities which are unrepelled by Puniſhments.

2. *Unreformed Vices expoſe a Nation to Judgments.* Groſs Tranſgreſſions are called *Crying* Sins, becauſe they cry aloud to Heaven for deſolating Puniſhments: where theſe abound the Lord will avenge. This righteous Governour of the World will not ſuffer *Proclaimed* Wickedneſs to go unpuniſhed, no not where his Worſhip is frequented; yea, he is ſurer to viſit his profeſſing people than any other, for their Abominations. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will puniſh you for all your Iniquities.* Calamities hang over that place where Rebellion is committed againſt God; and certainly he whoſe Quiver is ſo full of deſtructive Arrows, cannot be at a loſs how to viſit *Am.* 3. 2.

ſit all Ranks of Men with Judgments, of which they ſhall be *ſenſible*, and againſt which they cannot *preſerve* themſelves.

But can any of you imagine that you are concerned for the good of your Nation, and not divert its Miſery by oppoſing thoſe Sins which do procure it? All care for the Community is extinct when you do as good as ſay, I will not be at the leaſt pains or trouble to make them a Holy and a Happy People: I'll not caſt in my Mite to prevent their Defilement or Deſtruction: Such *Gallios* are unnatural as well as Unchriſtian. Pretend not Inability, for each of you may do ſomething, at leaſt you are able to complain againſt obſtinate Sinners; and if you can do no more towards ſaving the Land, this will acquit you, and be accepted; whereas if you omit this little you can do, you would not advance Reformation had you the greateſt Power; for that ſelfiſh, baſe, careleſs, cowardly Spirit would *then* reſtrain you from this good Work as well as now.

I might have added the greatneſs of thoſe Benefits which Reformation ſecures to a Land, every one whereof makes thy neglect in promoting that Reformation a great inſtance of thy Unconcernedneſs for the Publick. But I proceed.

4. *If you neglect National Reformation, you have not that true regard to your own Happineſs which rational Self-love directs.* *Carnal* Self-love deſtroys Mankind, but *Rational* Self-love is that Principle by which God governs this World, and on which he grafteth Grace it ſelf: This God owneth himſelf the Author of, and never ſeparates his Service from our aim at our own Happineſs, but requires the purſuit of *both* theſe together: Nor indeed can we attain the one without the other, for if we truly glorifie God in a way of Service, we ſhall be happy; and if ever we be happy, it muſt be by ſerving him who is Glorified in our Happineſs.

I think its needleſs to ſpend words to prove that you cannot ſerve God acceptably, unleſs you love your ſelves; nor that you love not your ſelves if you diſregard your own happi-

happineſs; the thing moſt likely to be doubted by rational Creatures, is, that you deſpiſe your own Happineſs, if you neglect National Reformation; yet this you muſt be convinced of, when you lay to heart.

1. *That you contract much Guilt by your neglect, to Reprove and Rebuke great Sinners in order to their Reformation.*

This is part of that Divine *Law*, which the Servants of God are obliged to keep: He hath ſet this upon your Conſciences as part of your *Duty: Thou ſhalt not ſuffer Sin on thy Brother, but thou ſhalt rebuke him.* And we are enjoyned to *reprove the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs.* Muſt not Guilt lie on that Man who lives in the Stated Omiſſion hereof? Moreover, if thy Grace be true, thou doſt not only violate plain Precepts, but Guilt is aggravated, becauſe thou offereſt violence to the *Inſtincts* of a regenerate Nature; for that prompts thee to teſtifie againſt Sin from a Divine *Antipathy*, and excites thee to make Men better from thoſe Holy Propenſions which render Goodneſs amiable and delightful, wherever it may be found. *Lev.* 19. 17. *Eph.* 5. 11

Guilt thus aggravated, attending the neglect of National Reformation, where is he that truly ſerves the Lord, who dares contract it, and make himſelf partaker of other Mens Crimes by ſinful Connivance? Or can a Man of that Character ſit eaſie under this Guilt from day to day? Is it a ſmall thing to have God to charge you with a diſregard to his Intereſt; and to ſay concerning you, Here's one who profeſſeth himſelf of my *Army*, but will not ſtrike a ſtroak for me: He prays *Thy Name be Hallowed*, but dares not contend with open Blaſphemers: *Thy Kingdom come*, yet ſuffereth *Satan* to Empire it without Controul: *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*, and yet allows my Laws to be openly trampled on, without ſo much as a Complaint againſt the moſt hainous Tranſgreſſor. *Mat.* 6.

Great Rebukes from Heaven may well be expected againſt ſuch as this Accuſation belongs to; nor could you arraign God's Juſtice, if you and your Children ſhould be given up to be Infected with thoſe Abominations you will not

not reprove: Yea, muſt not you and your Families eepxct a deep ſhare in thoſe Miſeries you refuſed to prevent? Nay, ſhould God make the Land happy upon its Reformation by other Inſtruments, may not you fear that neither you nor your Families ſhould be Sharers in that Bleſſedneſs.

2. *You looſe great Benefits for your ſelves and Poſterity which endeavoured Reformation would Entail.* If Deſolation comes on this unreformed Land, notwithſtanding thy loſt Labour, thou mayeſt hope to be *Marked* for Deliverance; for we ſee *Noah* who ſtrove to reform the old World ſaved from the Common Deluge with his Family; and grieved *Lot* with his Children eſcaped the Flames of *Sodom*.

Ez. 9. 4. Gen. 6.

Neither will it be a light matter if Sin ſhould ſtill abound and Judgments enſue, that theſe quieting thoughts will poſſeſs thy mind, Could I have reformed and ſaved this People, I would have done it: my Conſcience bears me witneſs, that I to my utmoſt have endeavoured to put a ſtop to thoſe Impieties that procured theſe Woes which now ſo diſtreſs my Country. But if Virtue ſhould ſpring up and Wickedneſs hide the head, how happy wilt thou find thy ſelf in having *contributed* thereto? thoſe *Tears* which ſtreamed at the view of heinous Sins, will be turned into the trueſt *Joy* and Gladneſs: Gladneſs to ſee Sabbaths Sanctified which uſed to be Prophaned; the Name of God Hallowed by a Sacred Reverence inſtead of Oaths or Blaſphemy; and Sobriety and Temperance obtaining in the room of Debauchery and Exceſſes.

Pſal. 119. 136.

How will it revive thy years to ſee the Bleſſed Effect of this change of things? when Peace, Proſperity, Love, Health, the Succeſs of the Miniſtry, and a Harmony among all ſorts and degrees of Men, ſhall joyntly witneſs God's Approbation of a *Reformed* People! Thy own *Graces* will improve by the good Examples ſuch a ſtate of things affords, and thoſe pourings out of the Spirit which it ſuppoſeth: thou wilt be free from the *Dread* of Impending Judgments, and inſtead thereof live in the chearful expectance

ſtance of publick Good; nay, how comfortable will it be when thou *dieſt*, to behold an Entail of Helps to the Holineſs and Happineſs of thy Poſterity? Theſe things may well convince us, that ſuch as neglect National Reformation, diſregard their *own Happineſs*.

I think I need inſiſt on no other *Mediums* to prove that none keep the Law who contend not with the Wicked, or which is the Sence of that; *None are the true Servants of God who oppoſe not Sin, and endeavour not the Reformation of notorious Sinners.* This you muſt allow to be beyond diſpute, unleſs you can think him a faithful Servant of God who hath no true Zeal for God's Honour, no real Compaſſion or Love to Souls, no due Concern for the Community, nor true Regard to his own Happineſs, or to that of his Poſterity. It follows therefore that you muſt *Renounce* that name, or engage your ſelves in reſiſting Sin, and promoting the Reformation of others by all juſt means; and know, that your aſſuming that *Name unjuſtly* will no more avail you than if it were renounced; and if you are not the Servants of God in *Reality*, the Priviledges of ſuch belong not to you; nay, you are the Slaves of the Devil and the Servants of the Fleſh; and oh! how miſerable will the Portion of ſuch be found at laſt?

I ſhall apply this truth, 1. *Particularly* to the Societies for Reformation. 2. More *generally* to all who hear me.

1. To ſuch as are Members of the Societies for Reformation, or any way engaged in this great Work. You deſerve *Encouragement*, nor may a word of Advice be altogether needleſs: What I judge proper to you, will be comprehended under two Heads.

1. *Make light of the diſcouragements which attend the Work of National Reformation.* What you have heard may vindicate you from Reproach, and Steel you againſt Fears. Can that be called *buſie meddling* by which you approve your ſelves the Servants of the Living God, and fill up your place as ſuch for God's Glory and a Common Good? or ſhould any call you *ſevere* when you ſtop

Men

Men from deſtroying themſelves and Nation? Can any wonder that reproachful *Lies* purſue you in this Enterprize? or be ſo imprudent as not allow for it when you thus diſturb the Kingdom of the Devil, ſtem a Tide of Wickedneſs to which Nature is ſo prone, and contend with a Multitude who by long cuſtom have become too licentious to ſcruple either what they *ſay* or do. Need you *fear* your Oppoſers? when you ſee *what* their conteſt is for, even Vices reproved by the Light of Nature. *and Works the Lord Jeſus came to deſtroy.* And *who* they are that contend with you, even no other than the *Wicked*, who make God their Enemy by breaking his Laws; who eſpouſe the Cauſe of *Satan* againſt that of Chriſt's, and when awaken'd will *Condemn* their own Follies, and approve of your Reſtraints.

1. Joh. 3. 8.

Ought you to *deſpond* as if too feeble to *carry on this* Work? When you have Chriſt and all Men of true publick Spirits on your ſide; when your Attempts are ſuſtained by *good Laws*; when you are bleſſed already with ſo conſiderable *Succeſs*; and the Cauſe is God's, in whoſe Power are the Hearts of all Men.

Dare you be ſo impreſſed by Diſcouragements as to *ceaſe* this Divine Work! when it is ſo *Noble* in it ſelf, ſo peculiarly the Care of the Almighty, ſo certain of Succeſs at laſt, ſo Glorious in its Rewards, and your time ſo ſhort to labour or ſuffer before you wear the Crown. I joyn with my Brethren in bidding you *be of good Courage*, and to depend on God's Protection, which hath hitherto ſo interpoſed, that as *yet you have not reſiſted unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin.*

Iſa. 41. 6.

Heb. 12. 4.

2. *Manage this Reforming Work as will moſt tend to its Succeſs.* To this end, keep far from the Evils you do rebuke in others. Convince by good Examples ſuch as you inforce by Penalties. Watch your Temper and Words, that you give no cauſe of ſtumbling to thoſe with whom you contend. Let your Conteſts be with Men as *Wicked*, and not from By-reſpects; let it be without Partiality with *all* whom you

you find obſtinately Wicked. Uſe *Prudence* as well as Conſcience in all your Undertakings; therefore never exceed the Laws, neither accuſe any whom you cannot fully convict: Make it appear to the Criminal that it's ſence of Duty, and not a meddling Temper; it's a deſign of Reforming Sinners, and not Enmity, Cruelty or Selfiſh Ends which encline you to get them puniſhed. Finally, be Humble, Modeſt and Watchful; fairhfully Reform to the *utmoſt* of your Power, and back all your Attempts with fervent *Prayer* to God for his Conduct, Succeſs, and Bleſſing.

2. I ſhall now addreſs my ſelf more *Generally* to all who hear me, and contract the Improvement of this Truth to two Heads.

1. *Love and readily ſubmit to Reforming Means.* I wiſh too many are not guilty of *hating him who reproveth*, whereas ſuch a Man is your beſt Friend, for he expoſeth himſelf to *pluck you as a Brand out of the Burning.* He ſpends his time, and adventures your Indignation, to keep you from deſtroying your ſelf and others. It's great folly to embrace the *Flatterer* who ſerves his own turn, and to abhor a *Reformer* who is intent on your trueſt Intereſt. *Am.* 5. 10. *Jude* 23.

Be alſo willing to *amend your ways and doings.* Tremble leſt you be in their number who hate and refuſe to be Reformed. How ſad is it to be fond of your ugliеſt *Blemiſhes*, and unwilling to be delivered from your Mortal *Diſeaſe!* Whatever miſtaken Conceits poſſeſs you, it's your *Shame you glory in*; it's Self-ruin you are ſo reſolved on, and your obſtinate Adherence to your vitious Courſes is no other than deſperate *Madneſs*; the Conſiderate do now eſteem it ſo, and in a while it will be confeſſed ſuch by your ſelves. God is now eſſaying your Amendment by exciting his *Servants* to reprove and puniſh your Villanies; for this you will be accountable as well as for all his other Methods of Converſion. Whiles he ſtrives there's hope of thy reclaiming; but know, he numbers the days of his Patience, and the means by which he would cleanſe *Jer.* 7. 5. *Phil.* 3. 19. *Pro.* 1. 28.

thee; and if thou ſtill reſiſt, he will give thee up to thy Luſts, and ſoon deſtroy thee as incorrigible, *becauſe I have Purged thee, and thou waſt not Purged; thou ſhalt not be Purged any more from thy Filthineſs until I have cauſed my Fury to reſt upon thee.*

Ezek. 24. 13.

Oh then that you would ſtrive to obey all the ways whereby God inſtructs you! Engage your minds to ſerious *Conſideration*, that ſo things may be repreſented in a true Light, and with that preſſing Weight as to *affect* you ſuitably to their Nature; then it may be expected that you will be willing to part with the Abominations, which you dare not *juſtifie* on a Death-bed. I charge you in the Name of that God who is your *Owner*, and will be your *Judge*, that you love not what he abhors; that you venture not on what he ſo plainly, ſeriouſly and oft forbids; and that you be not ſuch *Fools as to make a mock at thoſe Sins* which will render you infinitely more miſerable, than all the Puniſhments of God or Man *in this Life* can make you. In a word, bluſh that your Luſts ſhould ever be ſo loved as to make you content to ſuffer any thing upon their Account; and now apply your ſelves to Chriſt for liberty from that Thraldom, wherein your Vice reſtrains you; that ſo the good Laws of Men may not be a Terror, nor God an Enemy.

Prov. 14. 9.

2. *Let your Reformation extend beyond thoſe Sins the Laws of the Land take Cognizance of.* The Law of God is the only *adequate* Rule of Reformation; whatever is a *Tranſgreſſion of this is Sin*, though Humane Laws ſhould command it, or think it too trivial to be forbidden. Therefore ſtudy God's Law in the Extent and *Spirituality* of it, and frame your Lives by no lower a Rule. Watch againſt *inward Sins* which the Eyes of Man diſcern not, *for God will judge the Secrets* of the Heart, and Eternally puniſh many *Civil* Perſons for their *Heart* Unbelief, Malignity and Impenitency. Amend alſo thoſe *outward Faults* of which Magiſtrates take no notice; they reſtrain groſs Affronts to the Divine Being, and ſuch things as diſturb Human Societies. But be you convinced

1 John 3. 4.

Rom. 2. 16.

convinced that God's *Penal Sanctions* extend to whatever himſelf hath forbidden; and it's at thy utmoſt Peril if thou repent not of thy Lies, thy neglect of God's Worſhip in thy Family and Cloſet, thy covetous Griping, thy conceal-ed Knaveries, thy Levity and Backbiting, thy waſte of time, thy inordinate Paſſions, and the like. *My Brethren!* God will reprove *all theſe* as well as thoſe Crimes which the Laws of the Land do puniſh: therefore *theſe* muſt be Conſcientiouſly forſaken as ever you deſire a ſaving Intereſt in God's Covenant, or would avoid Eternal Deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord.

Take therefore your meaſure from *God's Statute-Book* (the Bible) andnot only from Man's. Oh live! and be what that appoints, for God will vindicate his own Authority, and be *ſincerely* regarded in whatever he hath made to be the Duty of his Creatures.

Finally, be not content to abſtain from the Sins forbidden by the Divine Law, but *ſtrive to obtain and exerciſe the oppoſite Graces and Virtues which it commandeth*; for negative Goodneſs will not ſuffice to ſave any perſon capable of Obedience in what the Statutes of God enjoyn as our Endowment and Employ: Therefore let your Habitual *Frame* and conſtant *Exerciſe* diſcover that the *Affirmative* Precepts do as effectually direct your Temper and Practice, as the *Negative* Precepts do reſtrain them. *Learn to do well* as carefully as you *ceaſe to do evil*: I ſhall conclude with a few *Motives* to excite you both to reform your *ſelves*, and to endeavour the Reformation of *others*. *Iſa.* 1. 17.

1. *Remember your late Troubles, and retain their Voice.* Can you forget what you ſo lately felt, as the effect of your former Sins? What Poverty accompanied ſuch as fled, what Frights, Loſſes and Anguiſh poſſeſſed them as ſtaid behind! You felt much, and were in the higheſt danger of undergoing more. Oh! will you not Reform thoſe Immoralities which provoked a Merciful God to diſarm you, and leave you naked in your Enemies Hands? Were their Inſults and Threatnings ſo agreeable as to leave no Impreſ-

ſion? Had your Dangers no Voice becauſe they are paſt? Know you not that it was owing to *Providential Reſtraints*, and not to your Power, or the good Will of many of your Foes, that you were not Butchered, and your Infants toſſed on Pikes as formerly? And can you be ſo *ſtupid* as to think God called you not to Reformation when he expoſed you to the Brink of Ruine for former Sins? or that your paſt Calamities do not remain a *lively Caution* againſt perſiſting in thoſe Sins? Muſt not you be *Infatuated*, if you reaſſume the Crimes you were ſo lately convinced of; and be horridly *ungrateful*, if you repeat them becauſe your dangers are removed by his goodneſs whom you had provo-
Iſa. 27. 9. ked? He is profane who acknowledgeth not Gods deſign by all you felt or feared, *was to take away your Sin*: Therefore be ſo regardful of God, and ſo wiſe for your ſelves,
Ezr. 9. 13. 14. as to ſay, *After all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds*, &c. *Should we again break thy Commandments, wouldſt not thou be angry with us till thou haſt conſumed us; ſo that there ſhould be no Remnant or Eſcaping*? Reſolve then, we will not commit thoſe Evils, nor *ſuffer* others to repeat thoſe Abominations, againſt which God ſo plainly teſtified in the Diſtreſſes we *lately* ſuffered.

2. *Conſider the Signal Deliverances God hath wrought, and the amazing Proſperity to which you are ſo ſoon arrived*; he is blind and baſe Spirited, who owns not that Ireland *was*
Deut. 33. 29. *ſaved by the Lord*; Review the ſtrength of the Enemy, and Diſadvantages of your Friends: Was it of man that Diſtreſſed, Feeble expoſed *London-derry* was preſerved againſt ſo formidable an Hoſt? Or that ſuch a multitude of well Equipped Souldiers were Routed by a few undiſciplin'd *Enniskillen men*? Was not God ſeen in the amazing Retreat of thoſe Weak, Ill provided, Diſeaſed Forces with Duke *Schomberg*? Was it not *the Lord's doing* that our *King* fell not by that Cannon Ball which wounded his Shoulder? And that he obtained a Victory under ſuch great diſadvantages at the *Boyn*? Was it not our God that Saved *this City* from being Burnt by the enraged Enemy, at his

his Return? How near was all to be loſt again at *Athlone*, if God had not Infatuated the Enemy to leave the Works of that Town undemoliſhed, and ſo afford a Defence for our Forces that had paſſed the River, who muſt otherwiſe have been cut off by that far ſuperior Strength, which the Enemy brought down upon them? Who can deny God the Honour of Guiding that Bullet which cut off St. *Ruth* when he was directing the Guarding of that Advantagious Paſs, where our Forces without a Miracle muſt have been deſtroyed?

All muſt ſee the *Arm of God was made bare* for your help; he diſpirited, Divided, and Infatuated the Enemy, and this apparently and often. And can you be ſo *vile* as to think God did all this that you might commit Abominations? that you might return to you Vomit? and commence a new Rebellion againſt himſelf? *Iſa* 52. 10.

Moreover, your *ſudden healing* is as ſignally the Lord's doing as your very ſafety; who could imagin you ſhould in ſo few years be ſo fully peopled; your Stocks ſo Increaſed; your Houſes Built; your Trade Revive; your Rents Advanced; the Ordinances of God Reſtored, and all things flouriſh ſo as to make you the Objects of Envy.

How can you perſiſt in provoking a God ſo great, and ſinning againſt a God ſo merciful and kind? Hath he done all this to make you capable of Offending him more, or to oblige you in Gratitude to Reform? Sure, *Rom.* 2. 4. his goodneſs leads to Repentance; therefore Magiſtrates ſhould reſolve, and all Aſſiſt them to do as, 2 *Chron.* 34. 33. Joſiah *took away all the Abominations out of all the Countries, and made all that were preſent to ſerve the Lord their God.*

3. You may Humbly and Mournfully Confeſs, *there's much to be Reformed; notwithſtanding all the evil you have ſuffered, and the good you receive.* God might well expect that a people ſo Smitten and ſtrangely Saved, ſhould be very peculiar in their Walk, and Devout in their inward Frame. But alas, is it not far from this with many, with moſt!

How

How much open Profaneſs (which the Laws diſcountenance) doth ſtill abound! Oaths may be heard, and Drunkenneſs ſeen in your Streets; the *Strand* and other places, witneſs how Sabbaths are Unſanctified; ſtupid is he that cannot wonder to behold ſuch a return to Sin, after ſuch Shakes, Deſolations, Terrors and Deliverances. But were Provocations confined to the Mockers at ſerious Religion, the Aggravation were leſs: But alas, many who profeſs ſtrictneſs, and expect Eternal Happineſs in Gods Service, are corrupted, and forſake the *Law of our God*; many ſuch are drowned in the *World*, as if Heaven had not room in your Hearts; you *Match* your Children without regard to Grace, as if you cared not tho' the Devil had their Souls; you neglect God's Worſhip in your *Families*, as if you deſpiſed the Curſe that hangeth over ſuch, *Jer.* 10. 25. You are *Proud* and Vain as if you would vye with the world in its faſhion; you are *Extravagant* as if you had never wanted any thing, or were never in danger of looſing all; nay as if this were not enough, I hear ſome Profeſſors and Church-Members are grown ſo looſe, as to frequent and plead for thoſe Nurſeries and Schools of Wickedneſs, the *Play-houſes*, places the Devilclaimeth as his own, by his own account when he was diſpoſſeſſed of one, he entred into there, ſaying, *What had ſhe to do on my Ground*; places the Viſible Saints of all Sects account ſcandalous and Miniſters of all Profeſſions wrote againſt. What have many aſcribed your Debaucheries and Ruin to, more than theſe? and can you Encourage ſuch by your preſence, when your awakened Conſciences muſt tell you at leaſt on your Sick Beds, Wretched I that time was unredeemed which I ſpent there; Oh that I could recall it! it was the gratifying my vitious vain Heart, which brought me there, and now I feel my Guilt! There are other more inward faults to be amended, which I muſt leave to your own Conſciences; as decays in Grace; loſs of your firſt Love; formalities in Duties; yet theſe are great Faults, and will produce bitter Fruits if Unreformed.

4. *You*

4. *You are but upon Trial in all that Proſperity you now enjoy, and far from being out of the reach of Danger*; you have no Leaſe of it, that is not Forfeitable, and God tries you how you will carry it, and ſpeaks to delivered *Ireland*, as *Joh.* 5. 14. *Sin no more leaſt a worſe thing do befall thee*; God can ſtrike again, your Enemies are not Dead, nor your Defence Impregnable; former Sins which you may commit may bring your former Woes: Say not Profanely as they *Iſ.* 9. 9, 10. leaſt he ſay as *ver.* 11. how eaſily can God ſcatter you again, if you Sin again; how ſoon can God take away the Life of the *King*, upon whom ſo much depends of your Safety! Your Unreformedneſs after ſuch methods looks like a ſad preſage, that God's Sword will yet be drawn, and that he hath not made an end of Smiting, when you ſeem reſolved to begin to Sin afreſh; know that God's Jealous Eye is upon you, to obſerve whether after all that's paſt over you, you amend or not.

5. *If God be forced by your growing worſe to renew his Controverſie, your Calamities will be heavier than what you have yet endured, if not your utter Ruin*; your Sins will be aggravated hereafter by the ſore Judgments you have felt, the loud warnings you have met with, the ſtrange Deliverances you have found, and the Means and Mercies you now Enjoy; and be ſure theſe aggravations will be found in the weight of thoſe ſtrokes whereby God will teſtifie againſt them, *Iſ.* 63. 9, 10. God's Rebukes do riſe ſtill higher; *Amos.* 4. Bethink you then how oft God hath Smitten and Saved *Ireland*; and how deſolate he hath made the Churches of *France*, *Hungary*, *Bohemia*, *Alſatia* and the *Palatinate*; they were oft Smitten, oft Delivered, and at laſt are laid utterly waſte; and do we hold our Mercies by a firmer Charter then they did? Have we paſt under leſs methods of Amendment than they? Hath God waited longer on them than you? Is God's Honour more concerned in our Ruin than in theirs? Will not your Sins cry as loud in God's Ears? are not the men God employed to Correct them, the Popiſh Enemies to God's Cauſe as well as ours? And

were

were there not ſome Faithful Godly Praying Proteſtants in thoſe places as well as among us? Oh then, what can allay your Fears or uphold your Hopes, that you the Proteſtants of *Ireland* may think to Sin on and proſper, or at moſt be but gently Smitten ſtill! Flatter not your ſelves when you ſee God is managing his Controverſie with others, by utter Deſolations; it's a time of Jealouſie, therefore awake: Reformation muſt be your Safe-guard, or you delude your ſelves, and will but dream your ſelves out of the Goſpel, the Plenty and the Peace you do now enjoy: You will find that a Reſolution to provoke God more, will end in ſuch Plagues as will devour your Mercies and embitter the Remembrance of them; when God ſhall lay you waſte with his Judgments, and purſue you with his Wrath, wherever you flie.

Oh that theſe things which ought to perſwade, may by the bleſſing of God, force and fix ſuch Reſolves as theſe! I will by the Grace of Chriſt faithfully ſearch what needs Amendment, and Reform to the *utmoſt* of my Conviction, whatever I find amiſs in my ſelf and Family; that ſo we may not Forfeit our preſent Enjoyments, and bring utter woe upon our ſelves and others. Yea I will *Contend with the Wicked*, and do my utmoſt to reſtrain their Sins, that at leaſt they may not cry ſo loud as to make the Nation Deſolate.

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